AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0015] beginning at page 8, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--In the FRAME TRANSFER state 203, the first state machine (SM1) operates to perform the frame transfer operation in accordance with the standard protocol. In one embodiment, the first state machine (SM1) is configured to perform the frame transfer operation in accordance with a Serial Advanced Technology [[~~AT~~]] Attachment (SATA) protocol. It should be appreciated, however, that the first state machine (SM1) can be configured to perform the frame transfer operation in accordance with essentially any type of communication protocol. Upon completion of the frame transfer operation, a condition is satisfied causing the first state machine (SM1) to transition from the FRAME TRANSFER state 203 through a branch 243 back to the IDLE state 201. While operating in the FRAME TRANSFER state 203, however, the first state machine (SM1) is also configured to accept requests to perform tasks other than those associated with the frame transfer operation.--

Please replace paragraph [0019] beginning at page 10, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Figure 2 is an illustration showing the second state machine (SM2) of the pair of state machines configured to provide standard protocol communication with interrupt capability, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The second state machine (SM2) includes an IDLE state 301 in which the second state machine (SM2) is waiting to start a communication process (i.e., frame transfer operation) in accordance with a standard protocol. As with the first state machine (SM1) of Figure 1, upon receipt of a signal to start a frame transfer operation, a condition is satisfied causing the second

[[~~first~~]] state machine (SM2) [[~~(SM1)~~]] to transition from the IDLE state 301 through a branch 331 to a FRAME TRANSFER state 303. It should be appreciated that the second state machine (SM2) transitions from the IDLE state 301 to the FRAME TRANSFER state 303 at essentially the same instance that the first state machine (SM1) of Figure 1 transitions from the IDLE state 201 to the FRAME TRANSFER state 203.--

Please replace paragraph [0025] beginning at page 13, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Figure 4 is an illustration showing a flowchart of a method for operating a pair of state machines configured to provide standard protocol communication with interrupt capability, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The pair of state machines correspond to the first state machine (SM1) and the second state machine (SM2) as previously described with respect to Figures 1 and 2, respectively. The method begins at an operation 401 in which both the first state machine (SM1) and the second state machine (SM2) are idle. In an operation 403, a frame transfer operation is started on the first state machine (SM1) [[~~(SM2)~~]]. An operation 405 immediately follows in which the second state machine (SM2) is operated to monitor the frame transfer operation being performed on the first state machine (SM1).--

Please replace paragraph [0028] beginning at page 14, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The method also includes an operation 415 for determining when the other task being performed on the first state machine (SM1) is completed. Upon completion of the other task, the method continues with an operation 417 in which a determination is made as to the status of the frame transfer operation being performed by the first state machine

(SM1). In the operation 417, an inquiry is made to determine whether the second state machine (SM2) is idle. Since the second state machine (SM2) is configured to monitor the status of the first state machine (SM1) with respect to the frame transfer operation, a condition of the frame transfer operation in second state machine (SM2) is representative of a condition of the frame transfer operation being performed by the first state machine (SM1). Therefore, if the second state machine (SM2) [[~~(SM1)~~]] is idle, the frame transfer operation continued to completion while the first state machine (SM1) was performing the other higher priority task. However, if the second state machine (SM2) is not idle, the frame transfer operation has not yet completed. The non-idle second state machine (SM2) causes the method to proceed with the operation 409 in which the frame transfer operation is continued on the first state machine (SM1). Also, the condition of the frame transfer operation as represented by the second state machine (SM2) is observed by the first state machine (SM1) to identify a point from which the first state machine (SM1) should continue the frame transfer operation.--